



Greening Headquarters Update

JULY 9, 2009

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Sustainability Operations Council

Office of Operations

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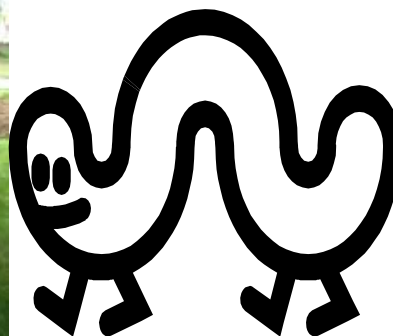
Thousands of bicyclists, including many USDA employees, turned out to celebrate Bike to Work Day 2009 at locations in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. Bike to Work Day is intended to promote bicycling as a healthy, low-cost and environmentally-friendly alternative to drive-alone commuting.



Several USDA bike commuters met at Freedom Plaza sporting their new USDA bike jerseys with USDA messages on the back.

People's Garden

Lately, much of the greening efforts at the Headquarters Complex have been focused on outreach to tourist in and around the new People's Garden. For example on June 26, we had a big outreach event as part of the Folk Life Festival on the National Mall. The outreach events included tents with information on sustainable landscaping and a workshop on improving soil.



NRCS has been conducting "Healthy Gardens" workshops at the People's Garden on Fridays during the Farmers market. The photo above shows a child counting worms as a part a workshop on soil. Future workshops include *Installing and Using Rain Barrels* and *Inviting Wildlife with Bat Boxes and Other Backyard Habitats*. A complete list of all the workshops can be found at the People's Garden website http://www.usda.gov/documents/Healthy_Garden_Workshops_flyer.pdf

Remember to Recycle!

Items that can be recycled:

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Telephone Books
- White & colored Paper
- Computer Paper
- Shredded paper
- Paperback & hard cover Books
- Staples & paper-clips
- Catalogs
- Envelopes & boxes with plastic "windows"

If you have been by the People's Garden over the summer often, you may have seen our two Summer Interns working in the organic vegetable garden. Natalee and Meredith are from the University of Maryland. In addition to planting, weeding, watering, and harvesting, they have been answering a lot of questions from visitors to the gardens.



Next time you are by the People's Garden and see Meredith and Natalee, stop, say hello and learn about organic gardening.

The vegetables that have been harvested to date have been donated to the D.C. Central Kitchen (DCCCK). Not only does DCCCK combat hunger, it provides training opportunities for homeless people. One such opportunity is the Culinary Jobs Training program at their kitchen facility. As part of the Culinary Job Training, DCCCK is interested in bring their students over to the People's Garden organic vegetable area to learn about growing and harvesting food. To learn more about DCCCK, visit <http://www.dccentralkitchen.org/>



Natalee dropping off lettuce and radishes at DCCCK. To date over 150 pounds of produce has been harvested and donated to DCCCK.

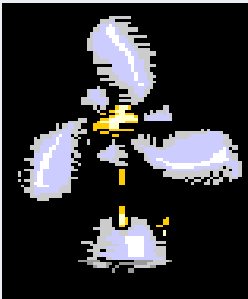
If you are interested in getting updates on activities and events at the People's Garden, you can receive updates from Twitter. See <http://twitter.com/peoplesgarden>

Sustainable Buildings

The 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act (EISA) requires agencies to have 15% of their facilities sustainable by 2015. USDA is updating its Sustainable Building Plan to meet this mandate. To help lead this effort, the Office of Property and Procurement Management has recently hired Catherine Broad, our new Sustainable Buildings Program Manager. Catherine previously worked for DoD as an Environmental Protection Specialist greening DoD's construction practices, including the Pentagon Modernization Program.

The South Building Modernization is one of our vehicles to green the South Building and to help meet that EISA mandate. Phases 4A (Wing 5) of the South Building Modernization construction contract is scheduled to be awarded this fall. Efforts are underway this summer to incorporate new sustainable features in construction specifications. Wing 5 will not only feature high performance and energy efficient cooling, heating, plumbing, and lighting systems like earlier Modernization Phases, but new features such as daylight harvesters for offices and "airblade" hand driers for the restrooms. We are also working to include more biobased construction products and improve the recycling of construction waste. Our goal is to get the South Building a Silver rating as certified by the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (Commercial Interiors).

**Remember to
shut
off your fan
when
you leave your
room!**



Many of the sustainable features planned for Wing 5 will not be obvious. The photo above shows one of the day light harvester photo-sensors we installed in 2006. The daylight harvester sensor is small and looks like a Christmas light, but the sensor is connected to a control box which will automatically dim the lights when the office receives enough lighting from the outdoors.

The number of sustainable construction products and services is rapidly expanding. GreenShapes, a consulting firm specializing in greening buildings, is part of the South Building Modernization Team. More information about GreenShapes can be found at <http://www.greenshape.com/>

Remember to stop mail you do not want to receive, such as catalogs, etc.



As noted above, one of the technologies we would like the new “airblade” hand dryers in Wing 5. We will be piloting the hand dryers in the Men’s Fitness Center Locker Room and the Ladies’ Restroom in the back of the 1300 corridor. The hand dryers can significantly reduce trash waste in our restrooms. The Fitness Center Locker Room has also recently been outfitted with water efficient shower heads, ultra-low flow urinals, and dual-flush toilets.

Recycle Update: Waste Minimization & Recycle Updates

After reading an earlier USDA Headquarters Greening Update about our trash sort, Ron McClain (OGC), implemented a similar trash sort at Hunting High School in Calvert County. See http://www.bayweekly.com/year09/issue_23/lead_3.html



If you looking for ideas for outreach opportunities at schools or want to learn more about what we are doing so you can help “green” your community, we may be able to help you with ideas. Contact ed.murtagh@usda.gov.

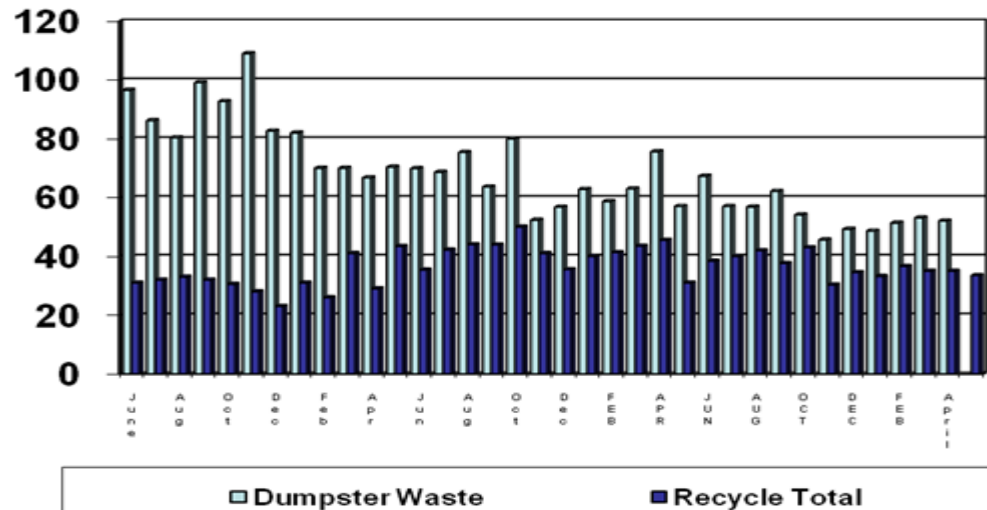
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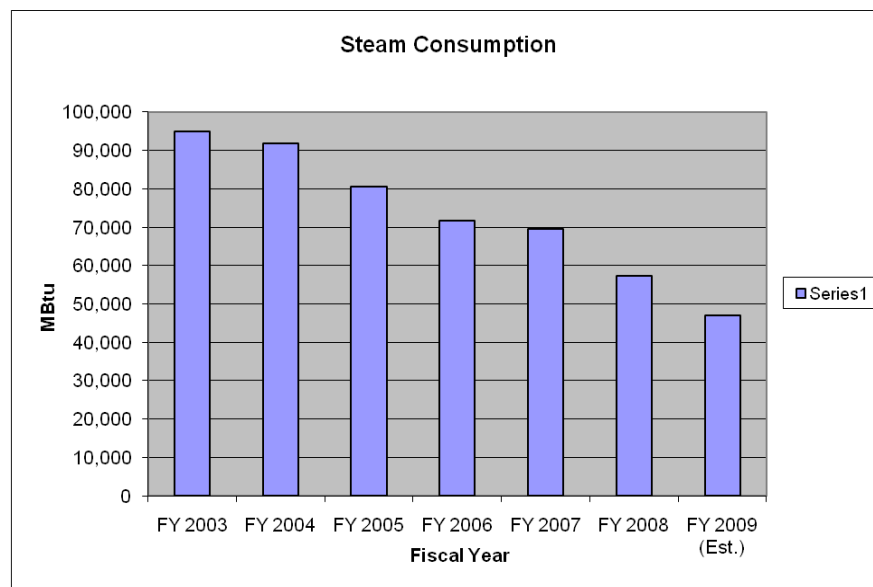
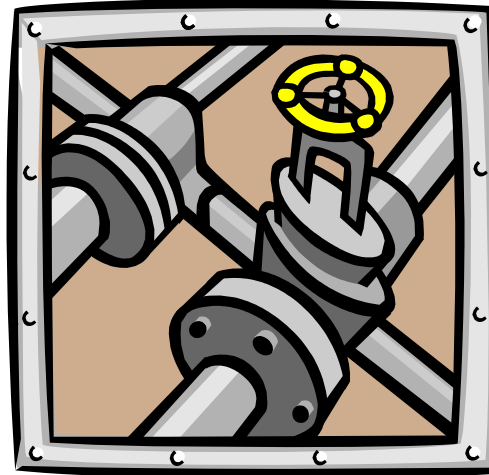


Wing 5 South Modernization includes requirements for the general contractor to submit and implement a construction waste recycling plan. In the past we have been recycling ceiling tiles, carpet, metals and concrete, thus greatly reducing the waste leaving our construction site.

In June 2009, we recycled approximately 40 tons of materials. This includes nearly 5,000 pounds of bottles and cans which is a record for our facility. We are seeing a continued trend in reducing our waste in the facility.

**Waste vs Recycle
(tons)
Graph
2007/2008/2009**





Our electrical usage continues to decline. In June 2009 we used 7% electricity compared to June 2008. The energy efficient lighting project, which is responsible for much of this reduction, is nearly completed.

Our water usage has shown similar reductions following the retro-fitting of the plumbing fixtures in the spring.

Buy Local Food!



Food Service

July 18-26, 2009 is Buy Local Week. Buy Local Week is a Maryland based effort to highlight the benefits when consumers buy local agricultural products. Go to <http://www.buy-local-challenge.com/> to learn more about Buy Local Week. It is harvest time locally and USDA Cafeteria will again start highlighting locally grown food in the serving area.

